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ABSTRACT

This action research project implemented and evaluated a plan to deal with students who lack enthusiasm about school and have difficulty in following classroom rules, keeping on task, and using appropriate social skills. The targeted population consisted of high school students in five industrial technology classes in a rural western Illinois community. The problems of student disruptive behavior, lack of motivation, and poor academic success within the student population were documented through school records, surveys, portfolios, and observations. The 4-month intervention was multifaceted and included assertive discipline, student portfolios, and instructional techniques such as multiple intelligences approach, cooperative learning, and student journals. Post-intervention data revealed that classroom discipline was positively affected by strategies that let students know what is expected of them. Motivation was positively affected by using multiple intelligence strategies and cooperative learning strategies, with 42 percent of students identified as empowered, motivated learners on the pretest and 60 percent on the posttest. Twenty-five percent of students believed that classroom behavior was better than in classes where assertive discipline was not used, whereas 75 percent believed that behavior was the same. Study portfolios and journals reflected greater understanding and use of the new strategies and techniques. (Twenty appendices include data collection instruments and sample classroom materials. Contains 54 references.) (Author/KB)

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IMPROVING STUDENT BEHAVIOR IN THE CLASSROOM BY USING ASSERTIVE DISCIPLINE STRATEGIES

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Saint Xavier University

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Chicago, Illinois

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ABSTRACT

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Date: May, 1999

Title: Improving student behavior in the classroom by using assertive discipline strategies

This study describes a plan to deal with students being less enthusiastic about school, not following classroom rules, keeping on task, and using inappropriate social skills. The targeted population consisted of high school students in a western Illinois rural community. The problems were documented through school records, surveys, portfolios and observations.

Analysis of probable cause data indicated that students lacked motivation to stay on task, complete daily work, displayed poor classroom behavior, and the lack of social skills. Students do not see elevance in their own lives and display a poor work ethic. Poor classroom behavior is due to the lack of motivation, a decline in the social environment and a lack of parental involvement. The ineffective training of teachers on how to control classroom behavior, the use of ineffective teaching strategies and the lack of meaningful context contribute to low motivation of students.

A review of solution strategies suggested by knowledgeable others, combined with an analysis of the problem setting, resulted in the selection of the following categories of interventions: the initiation of an assertive discipline plan, the use of student portfolios, the use of instructional techniques such as multiple intelligences, cooperative learning strategies, student reflections to improve student motivation, classroom behavior and student achievement; and fostering student accountability to decrease the number of negative checkmarks on the student accountability checklist.

Postintervention data revealed that classroom discipline is positively affected by strategies that let the student know what is exactly expected of them. Students that are allowed to take part in the development of classroom policies take ownership in making sure that they work. Motivation is positively affected by using multiple intelligence strategies and cooperative learning techniques. Student portfolios and journals reflected greater understanding and use of these strategies and techniques.

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CHAPTER 1

PROBLEM STATEMENT AND CONTEXT

General Statement of the Problem

Over the past several years, high school students in this western Illinois rural community demonstrated poor classroom behavior which interfered with their academic success. This was evidenced by students being less enthusiastic about accomplishing school work, following classroom rules, keeping on task, and developing peer relationships. Evidence for the existence of the problem included anecdotal records, student and teacher surveys, and teacher observations.

The purpose of this study was to discover if the implementation of the concepts of assertive discipline would improve student behavior in the classroom. Assertive discipline was developed in 1976 by Lee and Marlene Canter as a means for teachers to modify the behavior of a student or an entire class behavior (Canter, 1978). Assertive discipline is a highly structured system, that was a mixture of common sense, and behavior-modification techniques that stress rewards and punishments as a way for teachers to take charge of the, classrooms.

According to Canter (1978), teachers who are trained in assertive discipline will see an 80 percent reduction in classroom disruption, will send fewer students to the principal's office, and will have a calm, positive classroom climate that will be conducive to teaching and learning. Also, teachers will have more success in dealing with parents of students who have behavior problems (Hill, 1990).

A second purpose of this study was to discover if frequent implementation of multiple

intelligences and cooperative strategies will improve student motivation to learn. Multiple intelligences are a relatively new school of thought developed by Howard Gardner that enables teachers to discover strengths in all children (Lazear, 1994). In the theory of multiple intelligences mental ability is not fixed, and everyone possesses more than one intelligence.

According to Gardner (1990), the identified seven intelligences include verbal/linguistic, musical/rhythmic, visual/spatial, logical/mathematical, bodily/kinesthetic, interpersonal, and intrapersonal. Verbal/linguistic intelligence is the capacity to use words effectively whether orally or in writing. Musical/rhythmic intelligence is the capacity to perceive, discriminate, transform, and express musical forms. Visual/spatial intelligence involves the ability to see form color, shape, and texture in the mind's eye and to transfer these to a concrete representation. Logical/mathematical intelligence is the capacity to use numbers effectively and to reason well. Bodily/kinesthetic intelligence is the expertise in using one's whole body to express ideas and feelings and the ease in using one's hands to produce or transform manipulatives. Intrapersonal intelligence involves knowledge of the internal aspects of the self, such as knowledge of feelings, the range of emotional responses, thinking processes, and self reflection. Interpersonal intelligence involves the ability to work cooperatively with others in a group as well as the ability to communicate verbally and nonverbally with other people.

According to Glasser (1989), "As a society, we are failing to understand that students will not work in classes that do not satisfy their needs" (p. 24). Cooperative learning is a means of motivating students by satisfying their psychological needs of love, power, freedom and fun in a classroom (as cited in Gough, 1989).

Immediate Problem Context

The western Illinois high school was a forty-year-old one-story building that was converted from an elementary junior high school. The population of the school was about 1,000

with 98% White, 2% others enrolled in four grade levels ninth through twelfth. The average class size was 27.5 students. The school had a 96.7% attendance rate, a truancy rate of 0.5%, a student mobility rate of 5.9% and a drop out rate of 2.3%. Economically, 6.8% of the students came from low income families. The graduation rate was 92.9% which was higher than the state average of 81.6%.

The curriculum followed a traditional high school philosophy of seven 55 minute periods. To graduate, students needed 35.5 credits, including four credits in mathematics, eight credits in English, four credits in social science, two credits in science, eight credits in physical education, and one credit each in consumer education and health. Special programs at the school included Educable Mentally Handicapped (EMH), Trainable Mentally Handicapped (TMH), Assist (Chapter One), Hearing Impaired, Regular Education Initiative (REI), and a community service program where students work in the community one or two days a week. The district also offered an alternative learning center for high school students who were unable to conform to the traditional high school classroom setting and a vocational training program at another high school in the area.

In addition to all of the academic programs, the school offered many nonacademic programs which benefit the students. A Scholastic Bowl gave students the opportunity to compete against other schools in the conference in academic areas. The peer helper and conflict mediation programs allowed students an opportunity to work and help fellow classmates. A cooperative work/study program allowed students to work at a job during the school day to gain work experience in areas of interest. There is a drama club and a speech team that performed in school dramas and musicals. A strong athletic program included football, volleyball, tennis, cross-country, track, basketball, baseball, softball, and wrestling. Of graduating students, 45% attended a four-year college and 20% attended a two-year college.

The school's administrative staff consisted of a principal, an assistant principal, dean of students, vocational director, athletic director, three counselors, a social worker, a psychologist and a school nurse. The teaching staff had an average teaching experience of 17.2 years with an average salary of $38,000. The faculty was made up of 27 males and 31 females. Bachelor's degrees were held by 51.1%, while 48.9% held master's degree or higher.

The Surrounding Community

The targeted school was located in western Illinois along Interstate 80 near the Quad City Metropolitan area and approximately 150 miles from Chicago. The town had a population of 6,000 and within a 20-mile radius a population of 20,000. The areas outside of the city limits was referred to as bedroom communities, because the people worked in businesses in the Quad-City area.

The community was primarily agricultural and did not contain any major factories or businesses. There were several small businesses such as a furniture store, several restaurants, three car dealerships, three corn and soy bean seed producers, several construction companies, a concrete readi-mix company, a gun manufacturer, a Wal-Mart store, a Farm and Fleet store, a motel, and a bed and breakfast. There were two banks and one savings and loan association that had combined assets of $235 million. A hospital in town offered 55 beds for medical/surgical care, 50 beds for long term care, and all major medical services.

The city assessed value of property was $44,608,608 and for the county $312,019,618. The basic levy per $100 assessed valuation for the city was $0.7820, for the school about four cents, and for the county about two cents.

The average winter temperature is 23° with an average snowfall of 31 inches and an average summer temperature of 73° with an average rainfall of 10 inches.

At the time of the study there was a 18-lane bowling alley, an indoor motion movie

theater, a community theater, two city parks and several ball diamonds. There were three golf courses, one 18-hole course and two nine-hole courses. North of town a canal offered areas for boating and fishing.

There were 16 churches, with 14 different denominations. The city government consisted of a mayor and city council. There were 4 full-time police officers and 29 volunteer fire fighters.

The school district encompassed an area of approximately 90 square miles. There were four preschools with 41 teachers and 358 students. The public schools in the district consisted of 4 elementary schools with 80 teachers and 1,400 students, a middle school with 30 teachers and 487 students, and a high school with 58 teachers and 967 students. There was also one parochial elementary school with an enrollment of 10 teachers and 120 students.

The district's overall student ethnic and racial make up was 98% White and 2% other. Low income students made up 13.7% of the student body of the district. Overall attendance was 96.5% with a drop out rate of 2.3% and a chronic truancy rate of .2%.

Of the 164 district teachers, 29% were male and 71% female. The average teaching experience was 16 years with 43% having bachelor's degree and 57% having a master's degree or higher. The average teacher's salary was $38,000 while the average administrator's salary was $62,000. The district spent approximately $4,243 per pupil.

Thirty-one percent of the general population had incomes less than $20,000; 25% earned between $20,000 and $35,000; 19% earned between $35,000 and $50,000 and 25% earned over $50,000. The city median household income was $28,698 with an average family income of about $34,000.

Over the past five years there were two major accomplishments that the citizens of the community achieved. The first was the passing of a $4,000,000 school referendum for building a new middle school and to placing an addition on the high school. The second accomplishment

was the telephone company installation of a new telecommunication system with fiber optics and digital switching which introduced the area to the world wide web by allowing access to the internet.

National Context of the Problem

Traditionally teachers were never given any in-depth competency-based training in managing the behavior of 30 students in their classroom. As stated by Canter (1989) teachers have often found themselves using a smorgasbord approach to managing the behavior of their students - a little bit of Glasser, a little bit of Gordon, and a little bit of Canter". Gordon's Teacher Effectiveness Training (TET), was to resolve problems by using strategies that are neither authoritarian nor submissive. Glasser's Reality Therapy was based on the assumption that behavior was the result of choices, and that inappropriate and disruptive behavior was derived from poor choices made by students. Canter's assertive discipline, stated that its the right of the teacher to define and enforce standards for student behavior that permitted instruction to be carried out (Emmer, 1986). The lack of ability to manage student behavior was one of the key reasons why both beginning teachers and veteran teachers were dropping out of education (Canter, 1989).

Research studies by Wang, Haertel and Walberg (as cited in Morris, 1996) over the past 50 years have revealed that classroom management had a direct affect on student learning. One of the factors, as cited by Kohn (1996) was that teacher remedies for discipline problems can be grouped into two large categories: reactive discipline, and proactive discipline. Reactive discipline was the process whereby a teacher reacted when a discipline problem occurs by deciding what to do on the spot and how to handle the discipline problem. This process was used by most teachers in the public school system. The problem with this approach was that the teacher had no plan on how to handle the problem and eventually created inconsistencies that would

eventually undermine their authority. Proactive discipline was a systematic approach that was predicated on the necessity for forethought, anticipation, preparation, and consistency with regard to the behavior of the teacher and the consequences of the students' misbehavior.

A second factor that had contributed to this problem was that the status of the teacher in society had declined in recent years. According to Canter (1979), teachers were once viewed in awe by both parents and students, today have had to earn the respect of the student and parents. These changes have paralleled the changes in how teachers have viewed themselves. These changes came from philosophies of Freud, Skinner, Glasser, and Gordon that had been brought into the classroom. These philosophies of discipline have had a major impact on the contemporary teacher. Teachers are feeling guilt, anxiety, and frustration because they are constantly questioning themselves on how they are disciplining their students. The expectations on how students should act in class vary greatly from teacher to teacher. This variance in expectations among teachers produces fewer clear-cut standards of acceptable behavior as compared to past standards.

A third factor that affects classroom management was the fact that there were more students with behavior problems in the classroom. Students with emotional, behavioral, physical and learning problems have appeared in regular classrooms. Teachers of these classrooms have had little training in how to deal with these students (Bender and Mathes, 1995).

A fourth factor that affects classroom management is how society feels towards teachers: "A 'good' teacher should be able to handle all behavior problems on her own, and within the confines of the classroom" (Canter, 1979, p. 6).

The problems listed above make it difficult for the teachers to meet their needs and the students' needs. For students to grow educationally, socially, and emotionally, they need to be in an environment where there is a teacher who will set firm, consistent, positive limits while

providing warmth and support for their appropriate behavior (Canter, 1979). Canter (1979) believes "the child has the right to have a teacher who is in a position to and will help the child limit his inappropriate self-disruptive behavior, have a teacher who is in the position to and will provide the child with positive support for his appropriate behavior, and can choose how to behave and know the consequences that will follow" (p. 8).

Canter (1989a) after becoming aware that teachers where not trained to deal with student behavior, developed a program called assertive discipline. The purpose of this study is to discover if the implementation of assertive discipline will improve student behavior in class. The concept of using positive reinforcement to improve student behavior was not new.

Assertive discipline was used to catch students being good, recognizing and supporting them when they have appropriate behavior and finally telling them everyday that their behavior was positive. Canter (1989a) recommended a three-step cycle of behavior management to establish a positive discipline system. First, once the teacher has established the specific behaviors, then it was important that the teacher taught them to the students. Second, was to use positive repetition to reinforce the students when they follow the directions. Finally, if a student continued to misbehave after the teacher has taught specific directions and has used positive repetition, then and only then would the teacher use negative consequences.

Besides the problem of improper behavior in the classroom lowering academic achievement, was that traditional teaching methods often failed to reach students with nontraditional learning styles. Problems resulting from this incongruity have generated concern at the state and national levels (Cropper, 1994; Layng, 1995). The literature has shown that failure to meet various learning styles has had a detrimental effect on students. According to Cropper (1994), a study of the juvenile courts in Colorado revealed that the top one-fourth of the delinquent population was composed of students in the top 15th percentile in intelligence. The

majority of the delinquents were found to have a spatial learning style associated with high intelligence. The study linked delinquency with students who did not respond to traditional teaching methods.

When students were not engaged in a learning style suited for them, problems such as time off task, incomplete assignments resulted. In general, these students viewed school as irrelevant. According to Layng (1995), a study conducted in Illinois used a series of activities designed to address multiple intelligences as an intervention and possible solution to these problems. Two of the three problems, time off task and disruptive behavior, showed significant improvement.

Academic achievement is a definite indicator of positive motivation. Individual student learning styles need to be identified by educators to foster motivation and facilitate academic achievement. Once a students preferred intelligences are determined, and the students are provided activities to match these learning styles, the students will be motivated to succeed. Curry stated (as cited in Cropper, 1994) that students will achieve statistically higher test and aptitude scores when permitted to learn difficult academic information or acquire skills through their specific learning styles.

The literature provided evidence that classroom management is important in controlling student behavior. If students know what the expectations of the teacher are, what the consequences are if they misbehave, and if the teacher is consistent with their enforcement of the rules and demonstrates proper behavior, then this should improve academic success and result in fewer discipline problems. Also, the literature provided evidence that motivation is a key to academic achievement. Students need to have consistent motivation to learn and the use of the strategies of multiple intelligences and cooperative learning should improve student motivation and may improve academic success.

CHAPTER 2

PROBLEM DOCUMENTATION

Problem Evidence

In order to document the extent of student disruptive behavior, lack of motivation, and poor academic success, a variety of assessments were used. The assessment tools consisted of teacher surveys, student surveys, teacher observations, teacher records and anecdotal records.

Teachers were surveyed regarding impediments to successful teaching (Appendix A). The teachers were to rate each of their answers to the questions from 1 to 4. Space was provided for any anecdotes, observations, or feelings they had regarding discipline problems that they had (or had in the past) encountered. The majority (96%) of the teachers indicated that the lack of student motivation was a prevalent problem in their classrooms. The survey also revealed that the teachers attributed poor achievement and discipline problems to the lack of motivation. Other major causes for poor student behavior were extra-curricular activities, student jobs, and the need for more training on how to discipline individual students and entire classes. Teacher observations further supported the results of the survey and were noted in the discussion with various teachers. The information in Table 1 shows how the teachers responded to the questions on the survey. From the responses on the teacher survey, teachers felt that there was not one specific cause for classroom misbehavior but several causes that were equal in weight. The four causes that highest were extra-curricular and after school jobs, the lack of teacher training in how to handle classroom disruptions, students not completing homework, and large class sizes.

Table 1

Percentages of probable causes from teacher survey

Probable Symptoms	Percentages
Large Class Sizes	14%
Homework Not Completed	15%
Poor Social Skills	13%
Teacher Training	16%
School Disciplinary Policies	13%
Extra-Curricular and Work	17%
Mobility of Students	12%

In the final section of the teacher survey, teachers were asked to supply anecdotes, observations, or feelings regarding discipline problems they encountered in their classes. Of the 23 teachers who responded to the survey 21 added personal comments. Seventeen of the teachers responded that talking while the teacher was talking, talking out of turn, student outbursts, or just meaningless chatter were a problems. Other problems encountered by the teachers were: lack of respect for teachers, peers and others' property; staying on task; using time wisely in class; students distracted by movement in the classroom; and not bringing required materials to class.

A student survey (Appendix B) was given to 177 students in order to determine how they felt about the discipline problems in class and what they felt might be causes for classroom problems. The first two questions dealt with external causes, while the remaining seven questions dealt with internal concerns.

The first two questions covered the areas of extra-curricular activities and after school jobs. The students were given two choices (yes, no) and they were also given space to make comments. From the information in Table 2, approximately 57% of the students surveyed participate in extra-curricular activities and 36% of them work after school. The responses to question 3 "Do you find the classes stimulating?", 59% of the students responded that they were not. In response to the last question, "Do large class sizes cause problems?", 46% stated yes

while 54% stated no.

Table 2

Percentage of Student Responses to Survey Questions

Questions	Yes	No
Extra-Curricular Activities	57%	43%
Work after School	36%	64%
Classes Stimulating	41%	59%
Lack of Teacher Control	27%	73%
More Problems in Elective vs Required Classes	24%	76%
Inconsistencies in Classroom rules	19%	81%
Current discipline policies too easy	5%	95%
Current Policies give to many opportunities for misbehavior	16%	84%
Class Sizes too Large	46%	54%

From the information in Figure 1, 63% of the those students surveyed participated in some sort of extra-curricular activities.

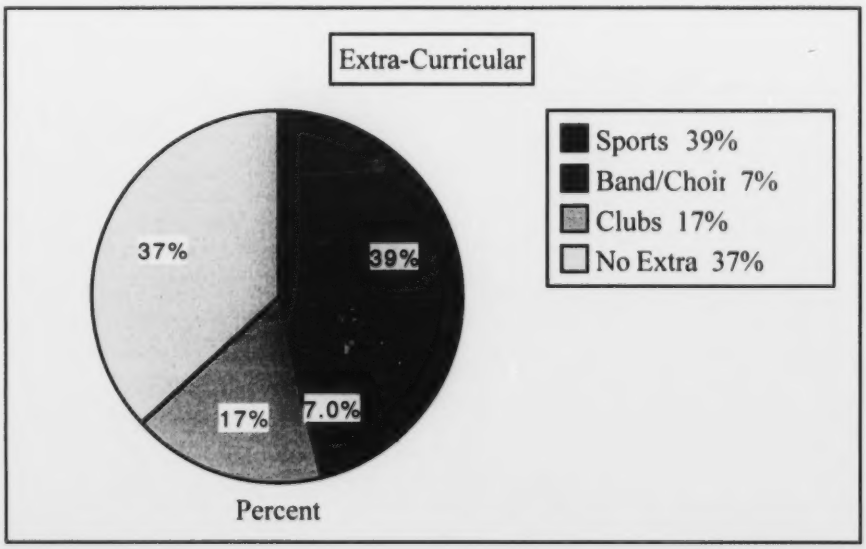

Figure 1. Represents the variety of extra-curricular activities students are involved in.

From Figures 2 and 3, 58% of the students worked between 3 and 5 hours a day and 48% of them worked between 16 and 20 hours per week. Students also felt (66%) that there were not

any more problems in required courses compared to elective classes.

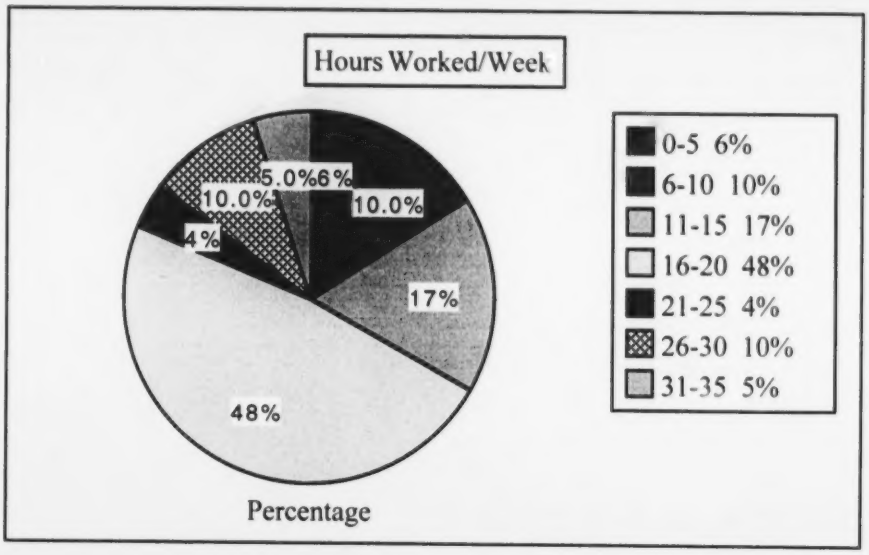

Figure 2. A representation of the number of hours students worked per week.

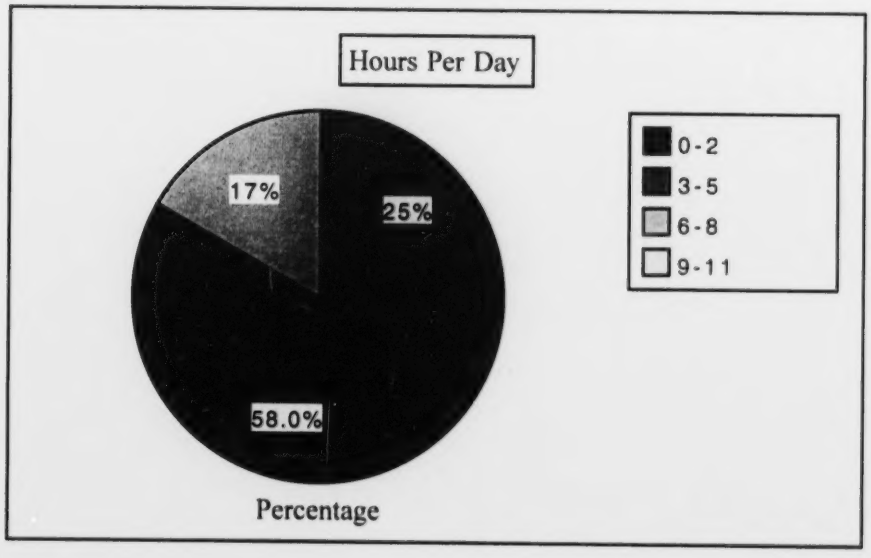

Figure 3. A representation of the number of hours students worked per day.

The responses to the questions dealing with lack of teacher control and inconsistencies in

the classroom, 68% of the students felt teacher control was not a problem, and 67% of the students felt that inconsistencies in the classroom was not a factor for classroom misbehavior. The students felt (86%) that the schools discipline polices were not to easy on students and that 73% of the students responding did not feel that the schools discipline policies do not give students to many opportunities to continue their disruptive behavior.

Responses to the first question(Do you participate in any extra-curricular activities?) ranged from various types of sports, band, choir, and clubs. The amount of time spent by the students in these activities varied from 2 to 4 hours a day. The responses to the second question ranged from 5 to 20 hours per week and 2 to 5 hours per day.

Another instrument that was used to provide evidence that the problem existed were referrals to the disciplinary administrator. There were discipline referrals for the 1997-1998 school year. Two major causes for the referrals were tardies and disruptive behavior. Since the teachers felt there was a link between lack of motivation and discipline problems, these figures were important in the analysis of the problem. Student behavior reveals insights between inadequate motivation and poor behavior which would have a negative impact on a student's academic growth.

Lack of academic progress might be the result of poor student motivation. Evidence that the students were failing academically was provided from teacher records. These records showed the number of students who were failing at least one subject. The data were broken down by grade level and quarter.

In summary, the problems of inadequate levels of motivation and poor classroom behavior by the high school students were supported by the evidence given. An overview of the problem through teacher surveys, student surveys, teacher observations, discipline referral records indicated that a problem did exist.

Probable Causes of Problem

Educators feel that students, society and family structure had changed over the past 10 years. These changes have caused teachers to spend a vast amount of time dealing with classroom misbehavior.

A school administrator in charge of discipline gave more insight into the following probable cause factors. Over 60% of the referrals that have come across her desk deal with minor offenses, such as students not bringing their textbooks, pencils or pens, or bringing completed assignments to class daily. Other offenses may range from students sleeping in class, not participating in group activities or discussions, or simply not working on their assignments when class time is given.

According to the school report card for 1997, the high school's average class size was 20.8, slightly higher than the state average class size of 19.3. The larger class sizes could be another probable cause factor for poor classroom behavior. Over the past 5 to 10 years class sizes at the high school had averaged about 20 to 25 students.

A look at current societal values could point to another probable cause factor. America's lifestyle today relies on instant feedback and gratification. The satisfaction achieved from the long hard work ethic has been replaced with the need for instant gratification of the "now" generation.

Children are most vulnerable to the negative influences that have poisoned our social environment (Garbarino, 1997 and Hill, 1990). The social context in which many children have grown up as been poisonous to their development. The overall well-being of our society has decreased significantly. Increases in dropout rates, drug abuse, gangs, teenage suicide, unemployment, poverty, sexual abuse, and single-parent homes have all contributed to an environment that adversely affects the students' desire to achieve academically and may lead to

improper classroom behavior.

Lack of parental support compounds the effects of other negative influences in a child's environment (Garbarino, 1997). Parental involvement and support greatly influence children's behavior and desire to achieve. Parents need to communicate high expectations and encourage their children to make the most of the opportunities available to them at school. A more serious cause of student underachievement and inappropriate classroom behavior is parents' lack of support for schools and teachers. Disrespect for education by parents sabotages educators' power to teach. If parents have realistic expectations, if parents and teachers respect one another, and if children are taught the value of a healthy work ethic, despite the multiple problems in our society, students can be taught how to achieve (Rimm, 1997).

Another probable cause for poor classroom behavior and achievement in some classrooms be the teacher. Teachers treat instruction and discipline as two separate and distinct functions (Black, 1994). Teachers will switch roles from instructor to disciplinarian during the course of a lesson. This results in the lessons being fragmented and choppy, leaving the student learning less.

According to Canter (1989b), teachers had never been trained on how to manage a classroom. Evidence of studies by Canter (1989b), Mc Daniel, (1986) and Baron (1992) showed that teachers have not been consistent in their enforcement of classroom rules, or their classroom strategies. Students need to know what is expected of them and what is expected of the teacher. They need to know that whatever they do they will be held accountable for their actions, both positive and negative. Baron (1992) in a study conducted of four junior and senior high schools found that the major problem for classroom problems was due to the lack of teacher control.

Besides classroom behavior decreasing student motivation, low self-esteem is another problem. Unmotivated students express their low self-esteem by not completing assignments or acting immature (Bruns, 1992). In order to help students overcome the feeling of lack of personal

success, teachers need to emphasize correcting errors and learning from them rather than teaching in an environment that avoids errors. The more success experienced by students, the more optimistic students are about future tasks and performances.

In addition to student low self-esteem, another possible reason for lack of motivation is ineffective teaching strategies. According to Gardner (1995), individuals do not all learn in the same way. Learners have unique abilities and talents and have acquired different preferences for how they learn (Fasko, 1992). Students may have strengths in areas of multiple intelligences that traditional classrooms do not tap. Educational standards should be expanded to offer a wider variety of opportunities for success (Gardner and Hatch, 1990). Lessons that involve a greater use of multiple intelligences. Teaching styles must meet the needs of today's students (Claxon, 1988).

The literature revealed that poor classroom behavior was due to the lack of motivation, the decline of social environment, and a lack of parental involvement. The ineffective training of teachers on how to control classroom behavior and their inconsistency in dealing with classroom disruption are leading causes for problems in the classroom. Ineffective teaching strategies, and lack of a meaningful context of learning contribute to the low motivation of students. The literature also suggested that low motivation is due to the students' psychological needs not being met.

CHAPTER 3

THE SOLUTION STRATEGY

Review of the Literature

The amount of time a teacher spends dealing with children who are disruptive and the stress that results from discipline problems in the classroom constitutes areas of concern for many educators (Ferguson and Houghton, 1992). This is not a new problem but rather one that has been around since teachers have opened up their doors to educate students. Another problem that teachers have faced over the years is how to get the student motivated to want to learn. A third area of concern to teachers is the lack of moral and social skills of students in their classrooms.

From the analysis of the literature there were several different strategies for classroom discipline. These discipline strategies can be grouped into two categories: reactive and proactive (Morris, 1996). The discipline approach generally used by many teachers in public schools is the reactive approach. Teachers who have used this approach wait until there is a problem, react on the spot and then decide on how to handle the problem. Since the misbehavior was not anticipated, the teacher usually has no plan of action to deal with the problem. This method of dealing on the spot creates inconsistency that will eventually undermine the teacher's authority. The reason for this is because the the reactions vary from day to day, from student to student and from circumstance to circumstance (Morris, 1996 and Kohn, 1996).

The second type of discipline strategy is proactive. According to Kohn (1996) proactive

discipline is an approach that is predicated on the necessity for forethought, anticipation, and consistency with regard to teachers' behavior and the consequences of the students' misbehavior.

Proactive discipline can be found in eight different discipline models as described by Morris (1996).

The first model is the Neo-Skinnerian model. This model focused on B. F. Skinner's notion that "human behavior can be shaped along desired line by means of the systematic application of reinforcement" (Morris, 1996, p. 7). If a teacher applies reinforcement then the teacher can shape a student's behavior. The reinforcement according to Morris (1996) can be both positive and negative. Both of these not only strengthen behavior but may cause the behavior to be repeated. Positive reinforcement is given after a desired behavior has been observed by the teacher. At this point the teacher will give a reward, such as extra recess, bonus points.

The negative reinforcement involves strengthening behavior by taking away the undesirable stimulus. This is not the same as punishment because the use of punishment suppresses the behavior of a student.

It is important to use reinforcement intermittently otherwise students will expect it all the time. Reinforcement supports three principles of the Neo-Skinnerian model: specify rules clearly, ignore disruptive behavior, and praise children for following the rules (Morris, 1996).

The second model is the Fritz Redl and William Watternberg model. This model focused on the idea that "group behavior differs from individual behavior. Teachers can learn how to use influence techniques to deal with undesirable aspects of group behavior" (Morris,1996).

The basis of this model is for the teacher to describe which students in the class will be the leaders, entertainers, and instigators. If the teacher is able to recognize which roles students assume in the classroom, then the teacher will be more aware of and better prepared for different

types of classroom disruptions that affect the whole class.

Besides knowing how students will act in a class the teacher must be consistent and be able use a diagnostic approach to find out all of the facts of a certain situation. The first phase of the diagnostic approach is the first hunch which is the teacher's idea of what is causing the problem. The second phase is fact gathering were the teacher acknowledges all obvious, and observable actions of the situation. The third phase is to find the hidden factors by investigating the incident in depth. The fourth phase is for the teacher to act or resolve the problem. The fifth and final phase is flexibility. Here a teacher tries one solution to solve the problem and if it doesn't work then tries a second.

The third model is the Jacob Kounin model which focuses on effective lesson management. When teaching a lesson it is important that a teacher knows what is happening everywhere in the classroom at all times. The use of nonverbal communication plays a significant role in this model (Morris, 1996). Teachers that use this model should pace their lessons appropriately and make smooth transitions from one topic to the next. Also, its important that the teacher monitor student progress and communicate this to the student consistently.

The fourth model it the Ginott model. In this model communication between teacher and student is emphasized. If a student feels that the teacher is willing to listen then there is the likelihood that the student will be willing to keep experiencing and learning. Another aspect of this model is for the teacher to continuously encourage and remain sensitive to the student's needs. When handling discipline it is important that the teacher stay in control of their emotions and not let the problem become a teacher versus student situation (Ginott, 1973).

The fifth model is the Dreikurs model. This model emphasizes the use of student choice in affairs of the classroom and the use of democratic ideals (Morris, 1996). Dreikurs believes that behavior is the result of one's own biased interpretations of the world. This model focuses on the

understanding why students behave a particular way in the classroom. Once teachers have discovered reasons for students' disruptive behavior and understands them, then the teacher can develop strategies to handle particular problems and therefore not allowing the behavior to interfere with learning.

Another component of this model is the for the teacher to establish simple, yet specific rules for the classroom followed by logical consequences.

The sixth model is the assertive discipline model. In this model, teachers make a plan, that has specific rules, appropriate consequences and realistic rewards. This behavior plan "sends students the message that discipline will be based on their behavior, not on the teacher's reaction to it" (Canter, 1978, p. 60). Teachers need to think positively about managing students and to remember that students should never be hurt or humiliated (Black, 1994). A copy of the plan should be sent home and another copy hung up in the room.

The seventh model is the Jones model. This model emphasizes the notion that teachers need to be able to maximize instruction time in the classroom. There is a strong emphasis on effective and efficient classroom management (Morris, 1996).

Jones (1979) feels that teachers lose approximately fifty percent of their instructional time because of students being off task or disrupting the teacher or other students. It is important that teachers combine the use of body language and an incentive system to control discipline problems. Also, teachers should have a back-up plan for those students with continual discipline problems. This plan will give the teacher step-by-step activities to follow for each incident.

The eighth and final model is the Glasser model. Glasser suggests that students should have an active role in their education and that teachers should help students become aware of how their behaviors affect the classroom and the learning process. One phase of this model is to allow students to provide input in the process of establishing rules and consequences.

Analysis of probable cause data revealed that poor classroom behavior and student motivation are major concerns of educators. Researchers suggested the following probable causes: parental and current cultural factors, a socially injurious environment, ineffective teacher training, poor classroom management, unprepared teachers, and the lack of appropriate social skills.

An analysis of the literature indicated that there are many different behavior modification packages available for use in the classroom and one needs to look very carefully at each one before making a decision. There are two basic behavioral modification models -- Obedience and Responsibility (Curwin and Mendler, 1988).

The goals of the obedience model are are to have minimal or no rule violations by students, and to make sure students' following orders. With punishment as the main intervention or enforcement procedure. This model results in fewer violations, but students learn little about responsibility (Curwin and Mendler, 1988). The models that are based on obedience are directed are directed toward keeping students in line rather than toward maintaining the student's dignity.

The goal of the responsibility model is to give students the opportunity to make mistakes and hopefully learn from them (Curwin and Mendler, 1988). Models based on responsibility took longer for the teacher to develop implement, but invited more risk-taking on the part of the teacher. According to Curwin and Mendler (1988), responsibility models are more effective because they encourage improved teaching as well as improved learning and are more consistent with the current classroom emphasis on critical thinking and decision making.

One method that research suggested to improve classroom behavior was assertive discipline. The main concept of assertive discipline is that you want to catch the students being good and then let the students' know that you like it (Canter, 1989; McDaniel, 1986). According to Canter the classroom teacher must have a systematic discipline plan that explains exactly what is expected of the students' and what the consequences will be if the students' choose to

misbehave. Both Canter and McDaniel noted that besides having rules and negative consequences, there must be positive consequences for following rules and heeding the teacher's request. McDaniel also stated that students come to realize that their responses will generate positive or negative consequences for them. Hill (1990) stated that a highly structured system mixed with common sense and behavior modification techniques that stress rewards and punishments are ways for teachers to take charge of their classrooms.

To improve student behavior a teacher needs to become aware of the underlying causes rather than the symptoms of the problem. Also, it is important that teachers ensure that needs of a students' dignity, self-esteem are enhanced, their social bonds strengthened and their appreciation for life increased (Curwin and Mendler, 1989; Palardy, 1996).

Canter (1996) stated that teachers who respond to student misbehavior in a calm but firm manner and clearly communicate expectations to students are effective classroom managers. He went on to say that teachers that use praise and class-wide rewards can positively affect both student behavior and achievement.

The use of a behavior modification program can help the passive, inconsistent teacher gain confidence and skill to become firmer and consistent. Also, these programs can help the hostile or negative teacher learn to positively influence students without yelling, and making vague and unrealistic threats (Ferre, L. and Ferre, V. 1991). The data also indicated that allowing students to take an active part in the development of classroom rules and consequences lead to improved classroom behavior (Canter, 1989b).

A search of the literature for solution strategies focused on classroom management and teaching methods which may enhance student motivation. Analysis of these data indicated that greater student ownership, such as a choice of projects and activities that may relate to students' real life situations, the identification of the individual students' learning modality, the use of a

variety of teaching techniques, model how you want the students to act, and the use of positive reinforcement all lead to improved classroom behavior and student motivation.

One method that the researchers suggested to improve student motivation was allowing students to have choice in what they study and how they study (Bruns, 1992; Glasser, 1989; Weinberg, 1979). According to Weinberg (1979), as people are given more choice, internal motivation will increase. Both Bruns and Weinberg noted that giving students choice in their education empowers them and incites their sense of autonomy as learners. Pardes (1994) agreed that as students take control of their own learning, they learn to motivate themselves.

In an attempt to engage students in their learning, experts advocated incorporating real-life situations into the curriculum. Bartscher (1995) stated the ultimate goal of teaching is for student-learned knowledge to transfer to real-life situations. This truly motivates the student. They can then apply their learning to context areas beyond those in which it was learned.

According to Glasser (1989), the need to engage students in real-life situations was described as follows:

> Many young people are working much harder at an after-school job at a fast food outlet than in school, for they see work, menial as it is, as more important than schoolwork. For most of them, it is easier to see quality in what they are asked to do there (achieve cleanliness, courtesy, and promptness) than the quality of the reading and calculating they do at school (p. 24).

Glasser added that until students are able to see the practical benefits of their education, they will continue to lack a fundamental desire to cooperate with the school system. In other words, school need to include activities that are directly related to students' interests. One way to accomplish this goal is through this is through projects. Maurer, an educator, said that allowing students to choose between projects that reflect their particular interests intrinsically motivates

them. she listed hands-on activities, guest speakers from the community, and collections of relevant items as suggestions for increasing student motivation (as cited in Pardes, 1994).

To increase motivation, researchers suggested that students need to be around more people who accomplish and achieve. Jantzen (1988) stated, "They need to be provided with live walking models" (p. 33). Teachers can help motivate students by sharing their outside interests (Jantzen, 1988). The use of guest speakers can serve as role models, as they can share their interests and careers. Former students that are presently enrolled in higher level education can serve as mentors (Abi-Naher, 1991).These mentors can help students connect their studies to the skills necessary for higher learning. The enthusiasm of guest speakers or college students may help students become excited about an area of learning or school in general.

Also, based on research, students are motivated when engaged in cooperative learning (Gough, 1987; Gallicchio, 1992; Wlodkowski and Jaynes, 1990). According to Glasser, cooperative learning is a viable means to meet the psychological needs of students to achieve (as cited in Gough, 1989). Glasser emphasized that teachers cannot force students to learn, but they can provide an environment where students are encouraged to learn.

When using cooperative learning as a means of motivating students, the question of whether to use extrinsic rewards is debatable. Do extrinsic rewards actually enhance motivation or diminish it? Seal contended that extrinsic rewards erode students' intrinsic motivation. In producing short term results though, rewards can be quite effective. The key to using extrinsic rewards is to avoid their continual use, a practice that can lead to decreased intrinsic motivation (Seal, 1993).

Intrinsic motivation can be developed in students through many techniques. First, a teacher must develop a classroom which is conducive to cooperative learning with the teacher taking the role of facilitator instead of an evaluating or controlling role. A teacher who uses adult

analysis in the classroom reinforces learner passivity (Deçi and Ryan, 1982). Even when serving as a facilitator the teacher must take care not to provide guidance in a controlling manner. Thus, teachers may feel that they are pushing or challenging their students to greater heights when, in fact, they are stifling their students intrinsic drive (Deci and Ryan, 1982). Benware and Deci (1984) have found that students who learn material in the traditional sense, for the sake of being tested on it, exhibit less intrinsic motivation than those who learn the material in order to teach it to someone else. Students are also more motivated when assessed on their mastery of a skill instead of their performance on a one-time assessment (Ames and Archer, 1988).

Identifying individual learning styles will help increase student motivation (Filipczak, 1995). While 80% of the students learn best from visual stimulation, most instruction is given auditorily. Therefore teaching and learning styles often do not match. Students with a teachers help should determine their dominant learning style so they can best match the most effective modality for personal learning. Equally important in a lesson, teachers need to realize learning should be presented to all the visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learning styles. The students' preferred learning style refers to the students' actions not the students' ability. Learning should be considered broader than cognitive achievement (Freeman and Whitson, 1992).

According to Klavas (1994), once students' learning styles have been identified, adaptations need to be made based on individual student perceptual preferences, time of day preferences, environmental preferences, and sociological preferences. In Klavas' study, when these changes were made, discipline problems dropped and test scores rose.

Sandhu (1994) reports that student learning styles are partially molded by gender roles, family identity, sense of community, importance of tradition, subservience to convention and authority, and religious beliefs. Once the students have an understanding of their particular styles, it is easier to help them understand how to utilize their learning strengths and then to

strengthen their less dominant modalities,(Cherney, 1994). For optimal motivation results, students are most successful when using their style strengths, and when the teaching styles used are diverse in nature, meeting the needs of all the students by addressing all learning styles.

Incorporating the theory of multiple intelligences into the curriculum is another way to ensure full classroom participation (Beacham, 1990). Intelligence is a multi-dimensional phenomenon that occurs a multiple levels of the brain/mind/body system. When the student is learning according to his' or hers' preferred intelligence, motivation is certain to increase (Lazear, 1992).

According to O'Connor (1994), the use of multiple intelligence teaching strategies challenges student thinking. This heightened challenge that results in an increase in the capacity for solving problems and in turn stimulates motivation (Quigley, 1994). A teachers approach that works particularly well for increasing students' eagerness to learn includes asking challenging questions. The use of predicting, applying, analyzing, and synthesizing levels of thinking challenges students, thus motivating them to learn (Wlodksowski and Jaynes, 1990). According to Costa, (1985) people performing at their peak seem to enter another world, time becomes distorted and a sense of euphoria prevails.

Multiple intelligence teaching methods are often incorporated with cooperative learning. Students draw energy and motivation from each other in cooperative groups (Costa, 1985). This is a result of the fact that cooperative groups are formed by grouping complementary intelligences (Gray and Viens, 1994).

Cooperative work can serve as a motivational tool, when it involves personal choice (Bartscher, 1995). The tasks that teachers assign to students must always be relevant and be needs-satisfying for the students, as Glasser (1989) stated, "No one will work hard--and hard work is the key--without believing that there is value or quality in what is asked" (p. 24).

Teachers should cultivate an atmosphere where students are encouraged and allowed to make some of their own choices.

To judge students' abilities solely by linguistic performance is to neglect and discourage those whose strengths lie elsewhere. Even when assessing, Smagorinsky (1991) confirmed the importance of testing authentically. Paper and pencil assessments are not always accurate (Osborne, 1995). Studies suggest that rigorous standards aligned with meaningful assessments can raise student motivation (Viadero, 1999).

The examination of the literature revealed that the empowerment and self-motivation of learners was a recognized need. Researchers also revealed that this goal could be obtained in an educational setting. Greater student ownership, the use of varied teaching techniques, practical applications, and cooperative learning were all solution strategies that strengthen motivation and encourage student learning. Incorporating higher-order thinking and using authentic assessments within the classroom were additional solution strategies which the literature had shown to be successful. Focusing on such strategies helped students actively engage in the processes of learning. Researchers have revealed that discipline problems will occur in any classroom. New teachers as well as experienced teachers can improve classroom behavior by establishing classroom behavior rules at the beginning of the year. Get students involved in the development of the classroom rules and consequences. Always reinforce positive student behavior frequently in and out of the classroom. The teacher should use body language and verbal cues to thwart classroom problems. Teachers should constantly remind students of the consequences for misbehavior, they should be assertive but calm at all times when handling discipline problems and finally if the misbehavior continues then use the schools administration as well as contacting the parents.

Project Objectives and Processes

Objective One:

As a result of implementing assertive discipline techniques during the period of October 1998 to January 1999, the high school students from the targeted school will increase their motivation to accomplish instructional tasks and class requirements by teacher records and student portfolios.

In order to accomplish this, the following processes are necessary:

1. Apply new procedures in classroom management.
2. Apply new instructional techniques.
3. Implement staff development in assertive discipline.

Objective Two:

As a result of implementing assertive discipline techniques during the period of October 1998 to January 1999, the high school students from the targeted school will improve their classroom behavior as measured by disciplinary referral records and teacher observation.

In order to accomplish this, the following processes are necessary:

1. Apply new procedure in classroom management.
2. Apply new instructional techniques.
3. Involve parents by informing them on what the rules and consequences are for improper behavior.

Objective Three:

As a result of implementing assertive discipline techniques during the period of October 1998 to January 1999, the high school students from the targeted school will improve their academic performance as measured by teacher-made tests, completed student assignments and student portfolios.

1. Use cooperative group techniques.
2. Use multiple intelligence techniques.
3. Implement the process of using student portfolios.

Action Plan

The following action plan was designed to implement the use of assertive discipline techniques to improve classroom behavior and motivation to improve academic achievement of high school students in the industrial technology classes.

The researchers will design and administer baseline surveys for teachers and students. Surveys were written in the summer of 1998 for the purpose of compiling baseline data.

First Week of School:

1. Prepare a parent letter with a parent signature form (Appendixes C and D).
2. Prepare a form that will list the rules, consequences.
3. Prepare a poster that will list the rules, consequences(Appendixes E and F).
4. Run off all material.

Second Week of School:

1. Hand out surveys to teachers - to be returned by September 11.
2. Have students in our classes fill out the student survey form.

First Week of Intervention(October):

1. Decide which classes will be used for the study.
2. Place student names on the letters to parents and have students take home.
3. Discuss how the assertive discipline plan will work.
4. Give class 5 bonus points for first day.
5. Hand out parent letter to students to be taken home for parents to read and sign.
6. Students are informed to return the signature form by Friday.
7. Given 5 points if all students return parent signature form.
8. Discuss the concept of student portfolios, journal entries and reflections.

Second Week of October to Third Week of January:

1. Continue enforcing the assertive discipline plan.
2. Keep a daily record of bonus points.
3. When 20 points are achieved a class reward will be given.
4. The use of cooperative groups will be used to review and introduce new concepts.
5. The use of multiple intelligence concepts will be use to enhance individual learning.
6. Weekly checks of portfolios for completion of task.
7. Weekly student reflections will be placed in portfolios.
8. Daily rewards given if all required material is brought to class.

Methods of Assessment

1. Student and teacher surveys will be given.
2. Collect student portfolios which will contain their reflections, and assignments which will be reviewed by the teacher and the student.
3. Teachers will keep records of attendance, missing assignments.
4. The information form both the pre-surveys and post-surveys of the teachers and

students will be compared to see if there were any differences.

5. Teacher and office disciplinary records will be compared to see if classroom behavior has improved.
6. Teachers will use checklists to see if students are on task, behaving, and completing their assignments.

CHAPTER 4

PROJECT RESULTS

Historical Description

The objective of the project was to improve student behavior, motivation and achievement among high school industrial arts students. The interventions of assertive discipline, multiple intelligence strategies, cooperative learning, and student portfolios were selected to bring about the desired results.

During the first week students in the power, metal and welding classes were presented a video on assertive discipline. Class discussions and small group cooperative exercises were used to develop the classroom rules and consequences. During the beginning of week two students were given the assertive discipline policy to be used for classroom management. Parents were also informed of the policy by a letter and signature form that was sent home.

The high school students were then presented a video on the different multiple intelligences. The students worked in small cooperative group activities that furthered reinforced the students' understanding of the different learning styles. At the end of week two, the students were surveyed to identify their personal strengths in the area of multiple intelligences (Appendix G). The students were placed in cooperative base groups based on the information gathered from the surveys. A lesson plan format was created to organize the flow of the multiple intelligence lessons taught within the course content (Appendix H). The lesson format identified the

intelligence being used as well as the secondary intelligences, skills, and assessments to be used. Examples of some of the specific lesson plans can be found in Appendixes I, J, and K.

Researchers introduced the topic of motivation to their students during week two. Speakers from the area were scheduled two times during the research project to come in and speak to the students. At the end of the research project, students analyzed their own motivational level by completing a checklist of behaviors (Appendix L).

During weeks three through nine, researchers incorporated multiple intelligence lesson plans involving student choice, higher level thinking skills, and authentic assessment. The researchers also used positive reinforcement when students acted appropriately and accomplished their daily tasks. Researchers developed their own particular units since their subjects were in two different areas.

Graphic organizers were introduced as learning tools to enhance the cooperative learning techniques and multiple intelligences strategies. Each lesson included an opportunity to practice the multiple intelligence and thinking skill in the context of the material being covered in the course. The targeted skill was assessed in a formal way during the unit. A sample assessment can be found in Appendix M.

Also important in the use of assertive discipline was reinforcing the rules, consequences, and rewards. Reviewing the rules and consequences was an important addition to the project. Reviewing was primarily done by using positive reinforcement throughout the class when students acted appropriately and accomplished their daily tasks.

The use of student portfolios was another educational technique to be introduced in the project. The portfolio was used at least once a week in each class. Topics and frequency of entries were dependent upon the content being covered in each class.

Guidelines for the portfolios (Appendix N) were created and sample entries were given as

models for the students. These guidelines were presented to the students in the first week of the action research project. Portfolio entries were graded and points given to hold the students accountable for their products and to provide feedback on their progress.

The portfolio entries were completed as an investigative activity to establish prior knowledge and to find a connection between what the students already know and what the students have learned. Also, the portfolios were used to hold all of their multiple intelligence and cooperative learning activities. Several reflection techniques were emphasized, including Mrs. Potter's Questions, and PMI's which can be found in Appendixes O and P.

At the end of the quarter, students used an evaluation form (Appendix Q) to examine their progress and identify areas which could be improved. Teacher comments were made on the sheets in order to provide feedback to the students concerning personal progress. The portfolios and the evaluation forms were shared with parents attending parent-teacher conferences. At the conferences the portfolios and evaluations gave the parents the opportunity to become aware of their students' thoughts and individual academic progress.

Students' ownership, choices and establishing the discipline policy were viewed as important factors relating to students' motivation and behavior by the researchers. The researchers wanted the students to "buy-into" the learning process and take an active role in class management and decision making. This was encouraged by the researchers through cooperatively establishing classroom guidelines. Further reinforcement occurred as the students were given choices in their class activities.

At the end of the project, students were asked to evaluate the learning process and discipline policy involved in each of the specific courses by completing a PMI. Randomly selected students completed a survey with the researchers. The researchers also completed their own self-interview in order to evaluate the overall effectiveness of the interventions. An outside

observer periodically observed the classrooms of the researchers and used a checklist to record what occurrences were happening.

Presentation and Analysis of Results

In order to improve student motivation, achievement, and to improve classroom behavior , researchers used multiple intelligence lesson plans which incorporated higher level thinking skills, authentic assessment and assertive discipline strategies. Student and teacher checklists and surveys, were used to compile the data.

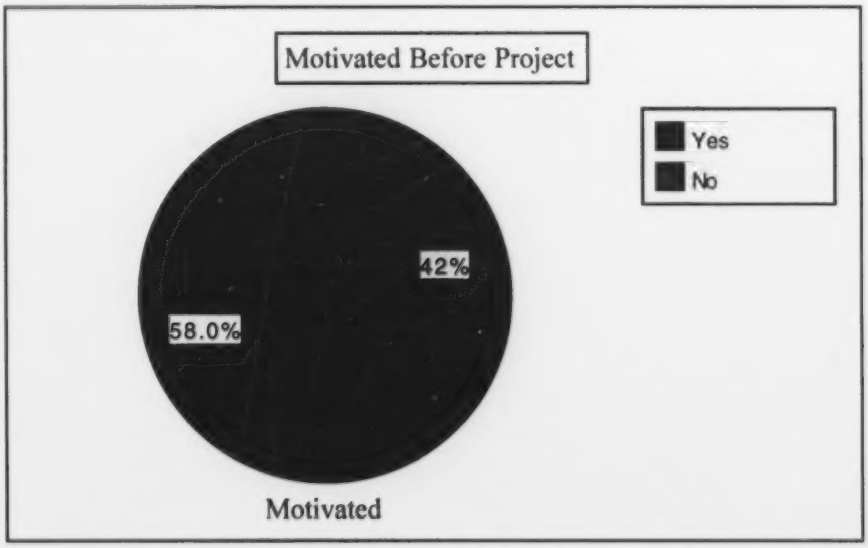

Figure 4 - The percentage of students who felt motivated to learn at the beginning of the project.

Figure 4 illustrates the percentage of students who felt motivated to learn at the beginning of this project. Students were given the Student Motivational Inventory checklist of behaviors to complete. To determine if students were empowered and motivated learners, the student checklists were tabulated to see if the students responded more positively than negatively. Forty-two percent of the students completing the checklist felt they were empowered motivated

learners. At the time of the survey 58% did not feel motivated.

Upon completion of the time allotted for implementing and assessing interventions, selected students were given an interview (Appendix R). Students were to consider if the strategies implemented over the previous twelve weeks had raised their level of motivation. In Figure 5, after twelve weeks of interventions, 60% of the students reported they were empowered motivated learners. Twenty-five percent felt this was true sometimes while 15% felt unmotivated. These results, when compared to the pre-survey, show an 18% increase in the number of students who were more motivated to learn as a result of the interventions.

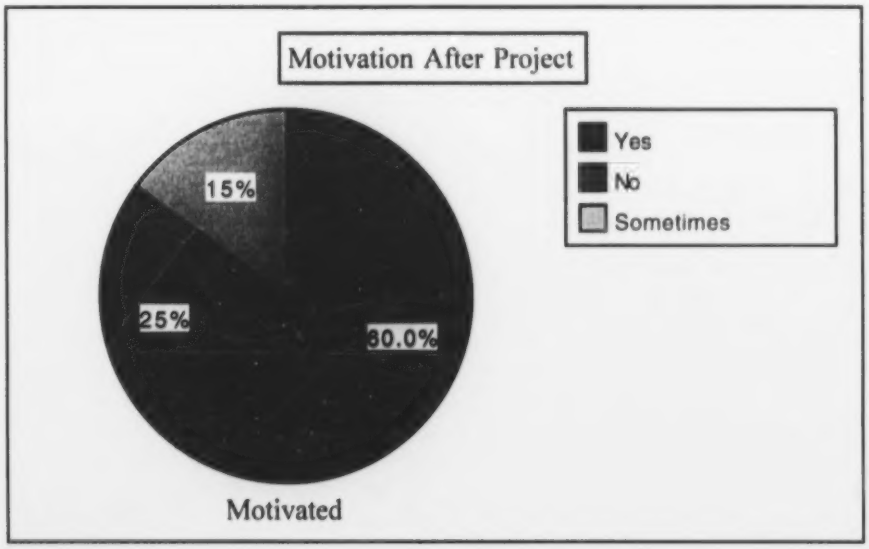

Figure 5 - The percentage of students who felt motivated to learn at the end of the project.

Prior to beginning the implementation of the interventions, students completed a Teaching to Multiple Intelligences survey to help determine their learning styles. In Figure 6, 30% of the students reported the linguistic intelligence as the learning style they least preferred. This would support the need for cooperative learning groups to help students develop and effectively use

this intelligence. The second intelligence that the students felt least preferred was the intrapersonal intelligence.

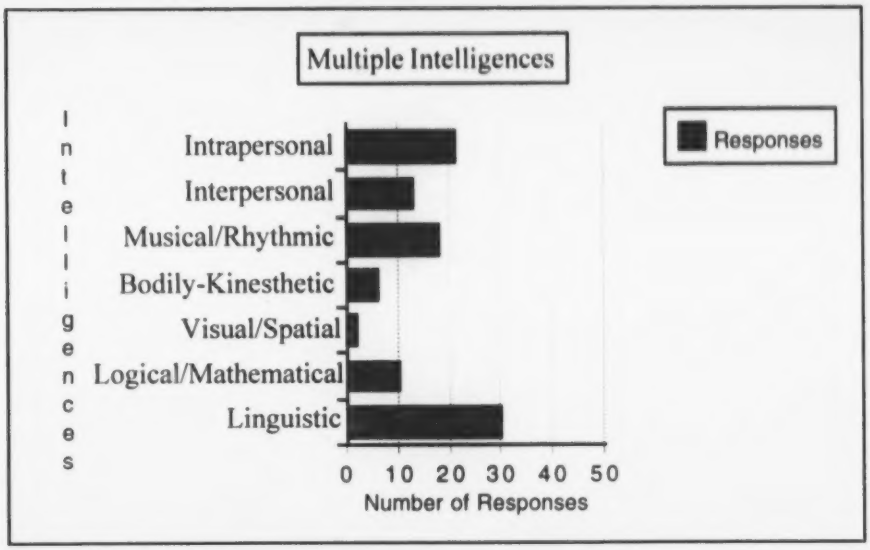

Figure 6 - Illustrates the intelligences least preferred by 100 students.

Based on the students' survey responses, the majority identified their most preferred intelligence as visual/spatial (see Figure 7). Interestingly, none of the students rated the intrapersonal or interpersonal intelligences as their dominant. Further, Figures 6 and 7 illustrate a wide variety of intelligences in the researchers' classrooms. The tabulated results suggested the need for teaching the seven intelligences.

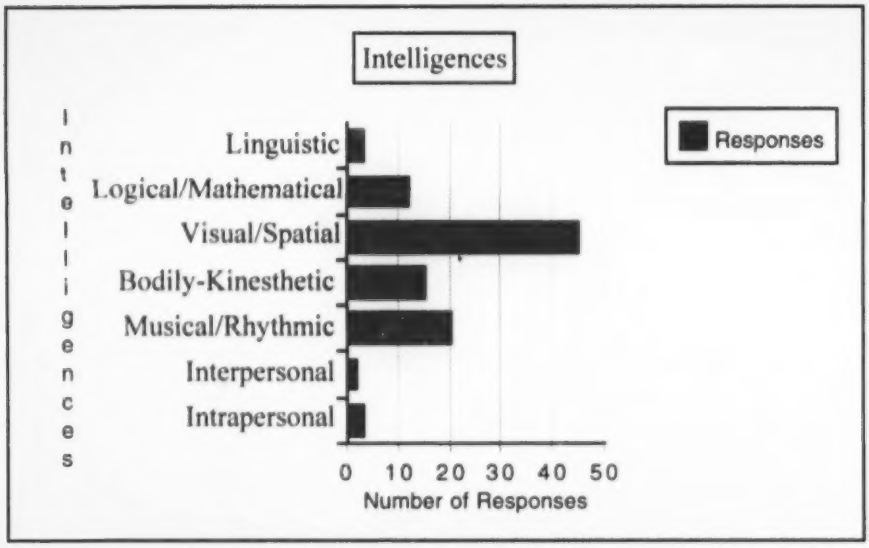

Figure 7 - The bar graph illustrates the most preferred intelligences of 100 students.

Figure 8 illustrates the percentage of students who felt that assertive discipline helped improve classroom behavior. After 12 weeks of interventions, 25% of the students completing the checklist felt that student behavior in class was better than in classes where assertive discipline was not used. Seventy-five percent of the students felt that classroom behavior stayed the same.

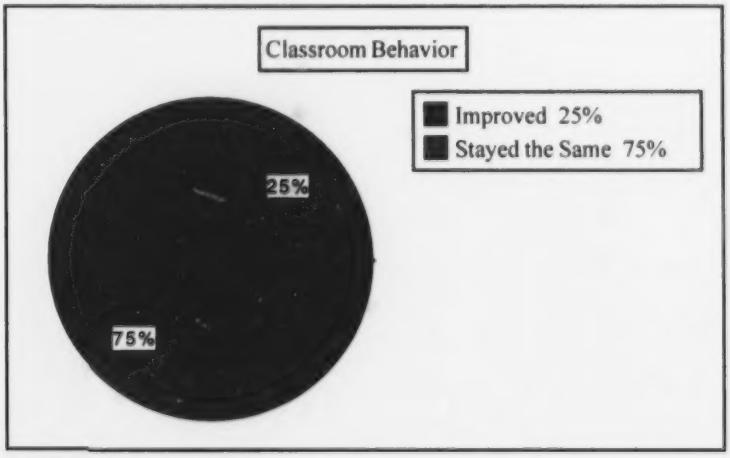

Figure 8 - Results of final student survey on assertive discipline.

Student reflections indicated that the students liked having a voice in the setting up of the rules and consequences of classroom. They said it made them feel like they had more of a say in how the classes were run, they knew exactly what was expected of them, and they knew what to expect from the teacher.

Student achievement in the power, metal, and welding classes was targeted for study. The semester percentage scores were figured for the 100 students enrolled in the courses. All but one student attained a passing mark of 69% or better. Eighty-nine students scored above 77%, achieving a C level or above. Through their responses, students took responsibility for their grades rather than placing the blame on external sources.

From the first quarter to the second quarter, percentage scores dropped by five or more percentage points for 68 of the students in the study. The scores of 20 students dropped by four percentage points or less. Eleven students showed an increase of four percentage points or less. One student showed no change from one quarter to the next.

The number of students whose percentage dropped from the first quarter to the second quarter can be attributed to the types of activities and assignments completed during each quarter. During the first quarter, a number of assignments were of an introductory nature and less complex. Therefore, students were more likely to complete the assigned tasks. As the school year moved on, assignments, activities, and material became more challenging and complex. Therefore, the range of student scores reflected a more traditional distribution.

When determining the average class percentage for the period of the research and comparing it to the same score from the previous year, there was a modest increase of 3.1%. Determining the cause of this increase from one year to the next is difficult. The introduction of multiple intelligences strategies, higher order thinking skills, journalizing, the accountability checklist, and the use of assertive discipline could be causes of the change. However, thought

must be given to the overall difference in the abilities of students participating in the study. Average academic ability of one group or the other may have had an effect on the class average.

Checkmarks on the accountability checklist (Appendix S) were compared from the first quarter to the second quarter. As seen in Figure 9, in three out of five classes the number of checkmarks were reduced by more than 10%. In two classes checkmarks did not decrease. This difference could be accounted for by the fact that students tended to be more enthusiastic and accountable in terms of completing assigned tasks early in the school year. Therefore, more assignments were either not turned in or were incomplete during the second quarter. This is a trend that educators deal with on an ongoing basis.

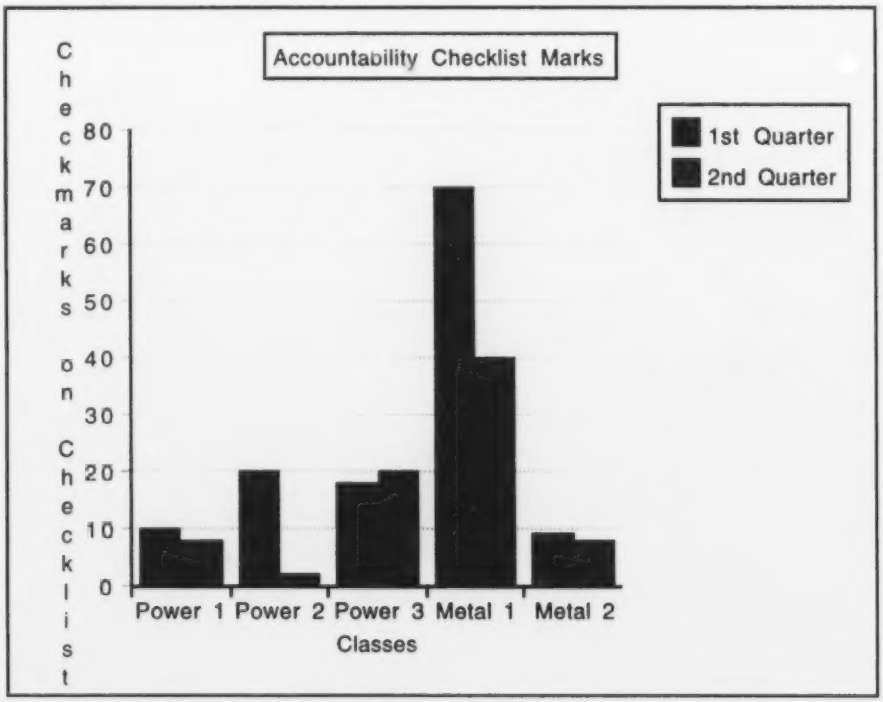

Figure 9 - Results of student accountability checklist.

Each of the researchers participated in a self-evaluation of the project (Appendix T). The researchers felt that the use of assertive discipline has some major advantages over other

techniques they have employed in the past. They found the students that they have in class to be more visual/spatial and bodily/kinesthetic over all the other types of multiple intelligences. The uses of cooperative learning and multiple intelligence exercises was time consuming at first but eventually the researchers became more aware of the importance of incorporating these techniques and strategies into their everyday lessons. The researchers also felt it helped improve their teaching.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The results of this study indicated that there was improvement in student behavior, motivation, and achievement. This has been evidenced by improvement in students' scores and student accountability as presented in the previous data. When students were given a voice in the construction of classroom rules and consequences, the students felt they had some ownership in how the classroom was conducted. The students also knew exactly what was expected of them and what they could expect from their teacher. Students in the power, metal and welding classes that used assertive discipline found that their teachers had more control of the class as compared to teachers in other classes that did not use this program.

The use of cooperative learning with the teacher being primarily a facilitator instead of serving as the evaluating and controlling person was a vital component of each class. Once students were placed in cooperative groups by using multiple intelligences exercises. Students were able to work with others to successfully complete assignments and, in turn, build more self-confidence. Working in cooperative groups motivates students and allows them to share ideas in a nonthreating environment and to receive immediate feedback from their peers.

Based upon the presentation and analysis of the data, student achievement and motivation showed a modest increase. Students were also more active participants in the class activities. On the post study student evaluation, students identified ways to improve their grades

such as studying for tests, doing homework, and paying more attention.

The teaching of critical thinking skills through multiple intelligences and cooperative learning did encourage greater student participation and was academically vital, but could not be mastered in the period of a few weeks. This action research project was a brief introduction to a few skills. Reinforcement of these skills and strategies is essential for students to integrate and transfer their use to other academic areas and life situations.

This project emphasized the instruction of several multiple intelligence strategies, thinking skills, cooperative learning techniques, and assertive discipline procedures. Rarely was there adequate time to review and practice the skills and techniques.

The students' portfolios took on an interesting role in the project. The portfolios provided the students with an opportunity for private reflections on topics before discussion. Previously in class discussion, students rarely voiced their thoughts, but simply listened to the ideas of others. The reflections in their portfolios allowed students to commit their thoughts to writing and organize them in a concrete way before discussion. The portfolios gave students a place to write down reflections of what happened that day, thus allowing for personal interaction between teacher and students. Teacher responses to the entries became a type of dialogue between teacher and student. This type of dialogue rarely occurs in a high school setting.

The researchers recommend that a change be made in the teacher survey by adding a section that uses a set of check-off boxes for the types of activities used in the classroom. Another part would be three short questions that deal with the degree that students are motivated. Finally, a second set of check-off boxes that relate to items that motivate students should be added. A second recommendation from the researchers is that teachers receive more training in the use of assertive discipline before incorporating into a class.

The researchers are aware of the fact that change takes time. With practice and training,

instructors will become better at recognizing that there are different intelligences that dictate how a student learns. The use of cooperative groups is an important way to get students to trust others and work to a final solution without the aid of the teacher. Using strategies which facilitate student success and enjoyment of learning will better serve all students. Understanding the individual learning styles and needs of students will make teachers better prepared to teach. The use of alternative discipline procedures to control misbehavior and ensure that the classroom is a place for learning is very important. No one method is better than any other but if used in conjunction with one another could improve the learning atmosphere of the classroom greatly. Though the time of the intervention of this action research has passed, the effect of this program may not be evident or accurately measured for a long period of time. Therefore, additional research is recommended. Each member of the research team was in agreement that this project had been successful and they would continue to implement in their teaching many of the techniques and strategies developed and used in the project.

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APPENDIXES

Appendix A

For the following questions place the number for the column that best represents your answer in the blank at the right.

	4	3	2	1
How often do you send students to the office for disciplinary action?	0 - 5 times a week	6 - 10 times a week	11 - 15 times a week	16 or more times a week
Approximately how many students do not complete their daily work?	0 - 10%	11-20%	21-30%	31% or more
How often do the lack of social skills interrupt instructional time?	0-10%	11-20%	21-30%	31% or more
Large class sizes cause classroom misbehavior.	Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Disagree Strongly	Disagree Moderately
Our current discipline policy has too many offenses before action is taken.	Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Disagree Strongly	Disagree Moderately
Extra-curricular activities and/or jobs affect student behavior.	Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Disagree Strongly	Disagree Moderately
Its the teacher responsibility to teach student behavior	Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Disagree Strongly	Disagree Moderately
The mobility of students affects student behavior.	Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Disagree Strongly	Disagree Moderately

What type of discipline problems do you(or have you) encountered in class?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Appendix B

Student Survey

The following is a survey for Mr. Francois, Mr. Smith and Mr. Harlacher whom are in a Master's degree program through Saint Xavier University. We are working on an Action Research Project which involves using Assertive Discipline to improve the behavior and motivation of students in our classrooms. It would be extremely helpful to use if you would take a few minutes to fill out the following survey. It is very important that every one returns this survey and answers it as truthful as possible. We would like to have it returned no later than September 15.

Thank you for your time.

Mr. Francois, Mr. Smith, Mr. Harlacher

Do you participate in extra-curricular activities?	Yes No
If yes, what type of activities?	_____
How long per day?	_____
Do you work after school?	Yes No
If yes, how many hours/week	_____
How many hours/day	_____
Do you find your classes stimulating	Yes No
Do you feel that the lack of teacher control causes student misbehavior?	Yes No
Do you feel that there are more behavior problems in elective classes vs. required classes?	Yes No
Do you feel that the inconsistency of classroom rules has caused behavior problems?	Yes No
Do you feel that the schools discipline policies are too easy on students?	Yes No
Do you feel that the current disciplinary policies give students too many opportunities to continue their disruptive behavior?	Yes No
Do you feel that large class sizes contribute to classroom disruptions?	Yes No

Appendix C

SAMPLE DISCIPLINE PLAN LETTER TO PARENTS

Dear Parent:

In order to guarantee your child, and all the students in my classroom, the excellent learning climate they deserve, I am utilizing the following Discipline Plan starting today.

My Philosophy:

I believe all my students can behave appropriately in my classroom. I will tolerate no student stopping me from teaching and/or any student from learning.

My Class Rules:

1. I will be in my seat, ready to start class and quiet when the bell rings.
2. I will be quiet and attentive while the teacher is lecturing or giving instructions for projects in the shop.
3. When working in the shop, I will stay on task at all times.
4. I will be respectful of others.

If A Student Chooses to Break A Rule:

1st Consequence: A verbal warning.
2nd Consequence: 1 minute after class.
3rd Consequence: 2 minutes after class and a call to your parents.
4th Consequence: Sent to the office for disciplinary action and a zero will be given for that day.

Students Who Behave Will Earn:

Points for themselves. When they reach a total of 30 points they will be allowed to purchase a can of pop at the end of the period.

Points for the entire class will be earned. When the class reaches a total of 60 points, the class will earn free time.

It is your child's best interest that we work together in relationships to his/her schooling. I will thus be in close contact with you regarding your child's progress in my classroom. Please sign the tear-off on the attached sheet and have your child bring it with him/her to school tomorrow. If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to call me or write them on the tear-off.

Sincerely Yours,

Appendix D

Classroom Rules

1. I will be in my seat, ready to start class and quiet when the bell rings.
2. I will be quiet and attentive while the teacher is lecturing or helping out fellow students at the board.
3. When time is given to do homework in class, I will work until the bell rings.
4. I will have my assignment completed on time.
5. I will be respectful of others.
6. If tardy I will spend 1 minute after class.

Consequences:

1st offense	A verbal warning.
2nd offense	1 minute after class.
3rd offense	2 minutes after class and a call to your parents.
4th offense	Sent to the office for disciplinary action.
	A zero will be given for that day.

I_____, have had these rules and consequences explained to me and will abide by them in the classroom.

_____ _____

(Your signature) (date)

_____ _____

(parents signature) (date)

Appendix E

Discipline Plan

If You Break A Rule

1st Time _____

2nd Time _____

3rd Time _____

4th Time _____

5th Time _____

Severe Disruption _____

Appendix F

Classroom Behavior Rules

Students Will:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Appendix G

Teaching to Multiple Intelligences

As individuals we learn in different ways. Ashley prefers to read the chapters in her history book and take notes. Ryan learns the information best by listening to the teacher's lecture. Ben likes to draw a time-line of the events to keep the facts in order in his mind, and Amy makes up little silly rhymes to help her remember important facts. The end result is that all four students are learning in their own ways. As your teacher it is my challenge and goal to reach out to each of the intelligences. Please help me determine your preferred learning style(s) by completing the following inventory.

Place a check mark in front of each statement which applies to you. Additional comments may be made at the each of each section.

LinguisticIntelligence

_____ Books are very important to me.
_____ I can hear words in my head before I read, speak, or write them down.
_____ I get more out of listening to the radio or a spoken-word cassette than I do from television or films.
_____ I enjoy word games like Scrabble, Anagrams, or Password.
_____ I enjoy entertaining myself or others with tongue twisters, nonsense rhymes, or puns.
_____ Other people sometimes have to stop and ask me to explain the meaning of the words I use in my writing and speaking.
_____ English, social studies and history are easier for me in school than math and science.
_____ When I ride down a freeway, I pay more attention to the words written on billboards than to the scenery.
_____ My conversation includes frequent references to things that I've read or heard.
_____ I've written something recently that was particularly proud of or that earned me recognition from others.

Other Linguistic Strengths:

Logical/MathematicalIntelligence

_____ I can easily compute numbers in my head.
_____ Math and/or science are among my favorite subjects in school.
_____ I enjoy playing games or solving brainteasers that require logical thinking.
_____ I like to set up little "what if" experiments (for example, "What if I double the amount of water I give to my rosebush each week?").

_____ My mind searches for patterns, regularities, or logical sequences in things.
_____ I'm interested in new developments in science.
_____ I sometimes think in clear, abstract, wordless, image less concepts.
_____ I like finding logical flaws in things that people say and do at home and work.
_____ I feel more comfortable when something has been measured, categorized, analyzed, or quantified in some way.

Other Logical/Mathematical Strengths:

SpatialIntelligence
_____ I often see clear visual images when I close my eyes.
_____ I'm sensitive to color.
_____ I frequently use a camera or camcorder to record what I see around me.
_____ I enjoy doing jigsaw puzzles, mazes, and other visual puzzles.
_____ I have vivid dreams at night.
_____ I can generally find my way around unfamiliar territory.
_____ I like to draw or doodle.
_____ Geometry is easier for me than algebra in school.
_____ I can comfortably imagine how something might appear if it were looked down upon from directly above in a bird's-eye view.
_____ I prefer looking at reading material that is heavily illustrated.

Other Spatial Strengths:

Bodily-Kinesthetic Intelligence
_____ I engage in at least one sport or physical activity on a regular basis.
_____ I find it difficult to sit still for long periods of time.
_____ I like working with my hands at concrete activities such as sewing, weaving, carving, carpentry, or model building.
_____ My best ideas often come to me when I'm out for a long walk or a jog, or when I'm engaging in some other kind of physical activity.
_____ I often like to spend my free time outdoors.
_____ I frequently use hand gestures or other forms of body language when conversing with someone.
_____ I need to touch things in order to learn more about them.
_____ I enjoy daredevil amusement rides or similar thrilling physical experiences.
_____ I would describe myself as well coordinated.
_____ I need to practice a new skill rather than simply reading it or seeing a video that describes it.

Other Bodily-Kinesthetic Strengths:

MusicalIntelligence

_____ I have a pleasant singing voice.
_____ I can tell when a musical note is off-key.
_____ I frequently listen to music on radio, records, cassettes, or compact discs.
_____ I play a musical instrument.
_____ My life would be poorer if there were no music in it.
_____ I sometimes catch myself walking down the street with a television jingle or other tune running through my mind.
_____ I can easily keep time to a piece of music with a simple percussion instrument.
_____ I know the tunes to many different songs or musical pieces.
_____ If I hear a musical selection once or twice, I am usually able to sing it back fairly accurately.
_____ I often make tapping sounds or sing little melodies while working, studying,or learning something new.

Other Musical Strengths:

InterpersonalIntelligence

_____ I'm the sort of person that people cone to for advice and counsel at school or in my neighborhood.
_____ I prefer group sports like badminton, volleyball, or softball to solo sports such as swimmingandjogging.
_____ When I have a problem, I'm more likely to seek out another person for help than attempt to work it out on my own.
_____ I have at least three close friends.
_____ I favor social pastimes such as Monopoly or cards over individual recreations such as video games of solitaire.
_____ I enjoy the challenge of teaching another person, or groups of people, what I know how to do.
_____ I consider myself a leader(or others have called me that).
_____ I feel comfortable in the midst of a crowd.
_____ I like to get involved in social activities connected with my school, church, or community.
_____ I would rather spend my evenings at a lively party than stay at home alone.

Other Interpersonal Strengths:

Intrapersonal Intelligences

_____ I regularly spend time alone meditating, reflecting, or thinking about important life questions.

_____ I have attended counseling sessions or personal growth seminars to learn more about myself.

_____ I am able to respond to setbacks with resilience.

_____ I have a special hobby or interest that I keep pretty much to myself.

_____ I have some important goals for my life that I think about on a regular basis.

_____ I have a realistic view of my strengths and weaknesses (borne out by feedback from other resources).

_____ I would prefer to spend a weekend alone in a cabin in the woods rather than at a fancy resort with lots of people around.

_____ I consider myself to be strong willed or independent minded.

_____ I keep a personal diary or journal to record the events of my inner life.

_____ I am self-employed or have at least thought seriously about starting my own business.

Other Intrapersonal Strengths;

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Appendix H

MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCE LESSON PLAN FORMAT

Skill:

Definition:

Synonyms:

Examples:

Define the Process:

Activities for Lesson:

Targeted MI:

Supportive MI:

Assessment:

Lengths of Time:

Appendix I

MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCE LESSON PLAN FORMAT

Skill:	Problem Solving, Evaluating Data
Definition:	To Analysis, To find, Solution
Synonyms:	Brainstorming, To Solve, Conclusion
Examples:	Find out problem in a points ignition system
Define the Process:	Define problem, Gather data, Reach Conclusion
Activities for Lesson:	Divide into groups (two students) Have each group write up two carburetor misfunctions with supporting data Exchange problems with other groups Deduct possible causes with solution All groups share data and write up a summary
Targeted MI:	Verbal, Visual Spatial
Supportive MI:	LogicalMathematical
Assessment:	Observation of group discuss and interacting Graded Evaluation of written summaries Quiz and test of carburetors
Lengths of Time:	Three class periods inner class discussions

Appendix J

MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCE LESSON PLAN FORMAT

Skill:	Organizing, Decision Making, and Sequencing
Definition:	To sequence, to sort, to classify
Synonyms:	Organizing, information gathering, distinguishing
Examples:	E6013 welding rods could be welded in all positions. E6012 can be welded in flat and horizontal positions. E6911 can be welded in flat position.
Define the Process:	Setting the focus, outline objective, give necessary information, process in groups, evaluate comprehension
Activities for Lesson:	Define three types of rods Divide students into groups of three. Give each group three rods. Have each group determine type of rod and its usage. Each group explains to class how they made determination.
Targeted MI:	Verbal/Linguistic
Supportive MI:	Interpersonal, Intrapersonal, Visual/Spatial
Assessment:	Have students present findings to class. Give each group three additional rods and have them classify. Quiz over material presented.
Lengths of Time:	Teacher presentation - 10 minutes Work in groups - 20 minutes Report to class - 10 minutes

Appendix K

Skill:	Analytical, Evaluative
Definition:	To prioritize, to draw conclusions, to sequence
Synonyms:	Inventing, brainstorming, visualizing
Examples:	Preparing a pad weld using 6013 welding rods
Define the Process:	Setting the focus, outlining objective, gathering necessary equipment, compare and contrast, eliminate, make decision
Activities for Lesson:	Divide students into pairs. Each group will secure necessary welding equipment. Students will make several horizontal welds in the flat position overlapping each weld by 25%. After each weld, the students will chip, wire brush and cool each weld. After making six to eight welds, the students will turn the metal 90˚ and make six to eight more welds in the flat position. The students will make four to six layers thus making a pad weld.
Targeted MI:	Bodily/Kinesthetic
Supportive MI:	Logical/Mathematical, Interpersonal
Assessment:	Have students evaluate own weld on weld consistency, straightness of the weld, and how welds are overlapped. Groups will evaluate each other using the above criteria. Instructor will also evaluate welds using the same criteria. A written quiz will follow.
Length of Time:	Explanation by teacher - 10 minutes Gathering of equipment- 10 minutes Welding - 30 minutes Evaluation will be done on the second day

Appendix L

A Student Motivational Inventory

Put a check beside the 10 items that motivate you to do your best works.

_____ P-Making Choices
_____ P-To Belong
_____ P-Success
_____ P-Control
_____ O-Influence
_____ O-Persuasion
_____ O-Status
_____ P-Interest
_____ P-O-Goals
_____ P-Creativity
_____ P-Self-Esteem
_____ P-Career, Future
_____ P-O-Guilt
_____ P-Games
_____ P-Enlightenment
_____ P-Good Attitude
_____ O-Avoid Blame
_____ P-Competition
_____ O-Money
_____ P-Independence
_____ P-Duty/Obligation
_____ P-O-Cooperation
_____ O-Adult Approval(Teacher/Parent)
_____ P-Competence
_____ P-To Be Loved
_____ P-Overcome Obstacle/Handicap
_____ P-Power
_____ P-Relevancy/Perceived Utility
_____ P-Honor, Family Tradition
_____ O-Fear of Punishment
_____ P-Challenge
_____ P-Encouragement/Coaching
_____ O-Interesting Activity
_____ P-Acceptance
_____ P-Appreciation of Effort
_____ P-Curisoity/Suspense
_____ O-Peer Approval
_____ O-Recognition/Acknowledgment
_____ O-Model/Example
_____ O-Praise
_____ O-GainingPrivilege
_____ O-Coaxing
_____ P-Enjoyment

Appendix M

LESSON NAME: Best Buy

TARGETED INTELLIGENCE: VerbalLinguistic

SUPPORTING INTELLIGENCE: Interpersonal

THINKING SKILLS: Problem Solving, Decision Making, Brainstorming

SOCIALSKILLS: Listening, Following Directions, Working Together

CONTENT FOCUS: Cooperative Education

MATERIALS: Consumer Report Magazines

TASK FOCUS: Students will determine the best buy for their money.

PRODUCT: Completed report on a product giving information on why it has been chosen to be of top quality and why should someone buy this brand over other brands.

PROBLEM: How to use resources and input from others to make a good decision.

ACTIVITY:

1. Students will work in pairs and mutually choose a product that they would like to purchase. Each will select a brand that he/she believes to be the best product currently on the market.
2. Students will brainstorm criteria that may be used in selecting the best product for a given amount of money.
3. After predetermining criteria, students will find articles in Consumer Report magazines on the product of their choice. A comparison of products will be based on criteria used by the magazine. Students will choose which product best meets their needs.
4. Students will write their findings into a short report and present orally to the class.

REFLECTIONS:

1. Why did you choose this product?
2. How did this product rate overall/
3. How did the brand you originally chose rate? How did that of your partner's rate?
4. According to the magazine, what criteria should be used in determining the best buy?

Appendix N

Grading Format for Portfolio and Reflections

Portfolios will be collected at random and checked for content and mechanics.

Assignments - 1 point per assignment

Content - 5 points maximum

Mechanics - 5 points maximum

Reflections - 2 points per reflection completed

Appendix O

Mrs. Potters Questions

1. What were you expected to do?

2. In this assignment, what did you do well?

3. If you had to do this task over, what would you do differently?

4. What help do you need from me?

Appendix P

PMI Reflection

P(+) _____

_____

_____

_____

M(-) _____

_____

_____

_____

I(?) _____

_____

_____

_____

Appendix Q

Student Reflections

Think back over the past quarter. Consider the activities we have done, discussions, and your achievements. Respond to the following questions keeping in mind all achievements, not just your grade average.

P+: What have you done well during this quarter? What type of activities did you enjoy?

M-: If you had to the past quarter over again, what things would you change?

I: What things would you like to do to improve during the next quarter?

On the back, please list pluses and minuses of the journals or reflections. Also on the back write out how you felt about the concept of assertive discipline.

Appendix R

Student Interview

1. Were there any differences in the teaching strategies of this class compared to your other subjects? Explain.

2. What methods of instruction did you feel you benefited from the most? Why?

3. What methods of instruction did you dislike the most? Why?

4. Was this class one that you enjoyed? Why or why not?

5. Did you feel motivated to learn while in this class? Explain.

6. If your answer was "No" to #5, what could your teacher have done to help motivate you?

Appendix S

Checklist of Student Accountability

Name	#	Prepared	Homework	On Task	Total

Appendix T

Teacher Self-Interview

1. Which strategies did you find the most effective? Why?

2. Did you see any changes in motivation in your students? If so, describe the changes.

3. Did you see any "behavioral" changes in yourself, as a result of using these strategies?

4. Were there any strategies(of those that you tried) that did not seem to work well for you?

5. What major insight(s) did you gain as a result of the information given in the FBMP and your subsequent use of the strategies?

6. Do you plan to continue using any of the strategies as a regular part of your teaching repertoire?

7. Have you undergone any changes in the way you view curriculum, as a result of working with these strategies?